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FEMA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
WAVERLY SHELL ROCK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
WAVERLY, BREMER COUNTY, IOWA
FEMA-1763-DR-IA

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is working with partners at the local and state levels and with other federal agencies to coordinate the response to the Iowa Flood of 2008 that flooded the city of Waverly, Bremer County, Iowa. Beginning on June 9th 2008, the Washington Irving Elementary School experienced extensive damage from the flooding of the Dry Run Creek and the Cedar River which flooded most of the City of Waverly. The Washington Irving Elementary School which houses grades 5 and 6 and has a student population of 250. The current location of the Washington Irving Elementary School was at 213 6th St SW in Waverly, Iowa

The school experienced complete flooding of the two (2) subterranean levels and approximately 12 inches throughout the 1st floor for three (3) days starting on June 9th. The lowest subterranean level contains building electrical and mechanical service equipment, and the upper subterranean level houses the school cafeteria, commercial equipment kitchen, a stage area that doubles as a music room, and an elevator equipment room that services a single cab hydraulic elevator between that level and the first floor above. While the first floor flooding receded rapidly following the Cedar River's crest the two lower subterranean floors persisted in being subjected to inflow while undergoing continuous pumping operation at the time of inspection on July 8. It is the early suspicion of a hydrologist retained by the applicant that high underground hydrostatic pressure due to a raised water table or new underground water veins caused the resulted in leakage through basement floor and/or walls into the building.

FEMA was authorized under a Presidential disaster declaration (FEMA-1763-DR-IA) to provide Federal disaster assistance to Washington Irving Elementary School, Waverly, Bremer County, Iowa, as a result of damages during incident period beginning on May 25, 2008 and ending August 13, 2008. Section 408 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 USC 5121-5206, as amended (Stafford Act, Public Law 93-288. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that Federal agencies evaluate the environmental effects of their proposed and alternative actions before deciding to fund an action. The President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has developed a series of regulations for

implementing the NEPA. These regulations are included in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 1500–1508. They require the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) that includes an evaluation of alternative means of addressing the problem and a discussion of the potential environmental impacts of a proposed Federal action. An EA provides the evidence and analysis to determine whether the proposed Federal action will have a significant adverse effect on the human environment. An EA, related to a FEMA program, must be prepared according to the requirements of the Stafford Act and 44 CFR, Part 10. This section of the Federal Code requires that FEMA take environmental considerations into account when authorizing funding or approving actions. This EA was conducted in accordance with both CEQ and FEMA regulations for the NEPA to serve as a vehicle to document compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The Proposed Action would provide FEMA grant funding is applied towards construction of a new Waverly Shell Rock Elementary School. The Waverly-Shell Rock School District has contracted the design work to STRUXTURE Architects. The construction is anticipated to start in the 2nd quarter of 2009 with completion and occupancy on January 1st, 2011. The proposed Waverly Shell Rock Elementary School will be built to all the current codes and standards. Approximately 75 acres of land was purchased for the construction of the Waverly Shell Rock Elementary School.

The EA was evaluated for any potential significant impacts to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology, land use and planning, noise, public health and safety, socioeconomic, traffic, and water quality. It was also evaluated for disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low income populations.

CONDITIONS

The following conditions are to mitigate this projects potential adverse impact. The Applicant/Sub-applicant must meet these conditions as part of the project. Failure to comply with these conditions may jeopardize Federal funds:

1. In the event that threatened or endangered species are observed in the project area, the FEMA Regional Environmental Officer shall request a Section 7 consultation with the USFWS (section 5.2.1.2, Protected Species and Habitats)
2. If cultural resources (particularly human remains) are unexpectedly discovered during construction, activities would cease in the immediate area and the Iowa State Historic Preservation Officer and the FEMA Regional Environmental Officer would be notified before work would continue (section 5.3.1.2, Cultural Resources)
3. Best management practices as recommended by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources would be implemented during and after construction to control erosion, with the selection of the Proposed Action (section 5.4.2, Geology and Soils)
4. A General NPDES Permit, or a waiver of the permit, could be required to be obtained from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and if required in consultation with the USACE a Section 404 permit would be obtained (section 5.10.1.2)

FINDING

FEMA makes the following determinations from the information contained in the EA for the proposed action that FEMA grant funding is applied towards construction of a new Waverly Shell Rock Elementary School.

Construction of the Waverly Shell Rock Elementary School will not result in any significant adverse impacts related to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology, land use and planning, noise, public health and safety, socioeconomic, transportation, and water quality, and for disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low income populations. The proposed action has been reviewed and, to the best of our knowledge, does not have the potential for significant cumulative effects when combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions in accordance with 44 CFR Part 10.8 (d)(3)(x). As a result of this FONSI, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

Kenneth Sessa
Regional Environmental Officer
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region VII